

strange swallows with a Welcome Swallow that accompanied them. The strange swallows, later identified as Barn Swallows, differed in their pure white venter (from mid-breast to under tail coverts), compared to the dirty grey of the Welcome. The chin, throat and forehead were a deep rufous brown, not a pale rufous brown; and the throat coloration was separated from the white breast by a broad black band. The upper parts were metallic blue-black. The tail seemed slightly longer and more deeply forked than the Welcome Swallow.

These birds disappeared from the area, but they were seen by P. Marsack on 22 February 1982 and by me on the following day.

This is the first record of the Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) from Western Australia south of the Pilbara.

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**Observations on Honeyeaters and their Food Plants in Peak Charles National Park.** — A recent literature search undertaken by one of us (S.D.H.) and Allan H. Burbidge showed that there are surprisingly few published observations of honeyeaters feeding on flowers of native plants. Moreover, observations listing even common animals and plants in nature reserves and national parks are rarely published outside reports of professional biological surveys.

We consider that brief notes of the kind given below may make valuable contributions to knowledge of the reserves on which the plants and animals occur, as well as to an understanding of the feeding behaviour of the birds involved and of the pollination of their food plants. This is a field of study to which a significant contribution can be made by every naturalist with a keen eye for birds and an inclination to reliably identify their food plants.

The following observations on honeyeaters and their food plants were made during an inspection of Peak Charles National Park and environs on 29 September 1979.

1. Open Shrub Mallee — 1 km E of Peak Charles (32°53'S, 121°10'E). Numerous coexisting Purple-gaped Honeyeaters (*Lichenostomus cratitia*), White-eared Honeyeaters (*L. leucotis*), Brown Honeyeaters (*Lichmera indistincta*), White-fronted Honeyeaters (*Phylidonyris albigrons*), a few Red Wattlebirds (*Anthochaera carunculata*) and one Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*) were seen on a 300 m transect between 0500 and 0700 hrs. Two Purple-gaped Honeyeaters were observed taking nectar from the long-styled flowers of *Grevillea plurijuga*.
2. Open Salmon Gum Woodland — 2 km N of Peak Charles (32°52'S, 121°10'E). A few Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters (*Lichenostomus ornata*) were seen in a sub-dominant mallee stratum between 0825 and 0833 hrs. One observed feeding on the small flowers of *Eucalyptus claycogona* foraged by darting pecks averaging ca. 0.5 to 1.0 seconds per flower.
3. Very Open Shrub Mallee over Low Heath — 3 km NE of Peak Charles (32°51'S 121°11'E). Several White-fronted Honeyeaters and a few Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters (*Phylidonyris melanops*) were observed during 0840 to 0900 hrs.
4. Low *Eucalyptus gracilis* Woodland — 10 km NE of Peak Charles (32°47'S, 121°14'E; outside National Park). Numerous coexisting Brown-headed (*Melithreptus brevirostris*), White-eared, Purple-gaped, Brown and White-fronted Honeyeaters, numerous Red Wattlebirds, and solitary Yellow-plumed and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters were seen between 0915 and 0953 hrs. All species except the Yellow-plumed and Spiny-cheeked were observed feeding on the small fragrant flowers that were in profusion on *E. gracilis*. Red Wattlebirds chased smaller species on several occasions. A few Striated Pardalotes (*Pardalotus striatus*) were also present searching through the masses of *E. gracilis* flowers for insects. They ignored the nectar and pollen but frequently came in contact with stamens and styles. As a result, incidental self-pollination may have occurred.
5. *Grevillea eriostachya* Thicket — 19 km NE of Peak Charles (32°45'S, 121°18'E, outside National Park). Several Tawny-crowned and White-

fronted Honeyeaters and a few White-eared Honeyeaters were seen feeding on flowers of *G. eriostachya* between 1006 and 1040 hrs.

The local abundance of honeyeaters in Peak Charles National Park and adjacent areas was striking and the number of species coexisting (8) at site 4 was the largest we have observed so far in any one vegetation formation in the South-west. Much of the vegetation in the National Park and environs was regenerating from recent fires and had few bird-pollinated plants in flower. This may have forced the resident honeyeaters to congregate in the small remaining areas of unburnt vegetation in which the above observations were made.

Additional bird species noted in the National Park were: Common Bronzewing (*Phaps chalcoptera*), Pallid Cuckoo (*Cuculus pallidus*), Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*C. flabelliformis*), Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx basalus*), Ring-necked Parrot (*Platycercus zonarius*), Crested Bellbird (*Oreoica gutturalis*), Grey Shrike-thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*), Willie Wagtail (*Rhipidura leucophrys*), Weebill (*Smicronis brevirostris*), Black-faced Woodswallow (*Artamus cinereus*) and Grey Butcherbird (*Cracticus torquatus*).

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**Birds of Canning Island, Archipelago of the Recherche, Western Australia** - Canning Island (33°55'S., 121°46'E.), off Observatory Point near Esperance, W.A., is recorded by Serventy and Whittell (Birds of Western Australia, 1976) as a breeding station of the Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*). There appears to be no other published information on the bird life of the island. However, Serventy, Serventy and Warham (The Handbook of Australian Seabirds, 1971) list several islands in the Archipelago of the Recherche as seabird breeding islands. On December 2, 1981, accompanied by Mr A.V. Thomas, I spent 1.25 hours on the island, which is about 450 m long (E. to W.) and 250 m wide (N. to S.). Its highest point is 24 m. The soil is mainly firm, fretted granite interspersed with bare granite outcrops. Most of the vegetation consists of short grasses and stunted shrubs with a patch of saltbush-like shrubs to one metre in height on the northern side.

Burrows of White-faced Storm-Petrels (*Pelagodroma marina*) were well-distributed wherever the soil was suitable. Evidence indicated considerable burrow activity. Only eight burrows were checked and four of these were short, due to rock or other obstruction; they were unoccupied. Two others contained a bird incubating an egg, one contained a bird only (an egg, if present, could not be reached) and one contained an egg but no bird. The number of burrows was estimated to be between 2,000 and 3,000.

Three pairs of Sooty Oystercatchers (*Haematopus fuliginosus*) were present and each pair defended separate territories; their young may have been hidden among the rocks. Some fifty Silver Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*), including flying young, and some "runners", were noted and several unoccupied nests were found; one nest contained two eggs. A pair of Pacific Gulls (*L. pacificus*) defended a high point but no nest was found. A pair of Caspian Terns had a nest with two eggs.

An Eastern Reef Egret (*Egretta sacra*) and some ten Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*) were seen on the rocks.

Although no Cape Barren Geese (*Cereopsis novaehollandiae*) were seen during the visit, their droppings and tracks were noticed in a number of places, clear evidence of their presence. Other species seen were Rock Parrots (*Neophema petrophila*), common throughout the vegetated areas and also seen among the rocks close to the water, Welcome Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) observed flying about the island and a number at the western end were entering crevices in the rocks, and several Singing Honeyeaters (*Meliphaga virescens*).

Probably the island is rarely visited and appears to have been free from human interference.

I wish to thank Mr S.G. Lane for his helpful comments during the preparation of these notes.

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